

HOMER HARRIS PARK PUBLIC MEETING #2 SUMMARY OCTOBER 1, 2003 GARFIELD COMMUNITY CENTER

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About 50 people attended the second meeting for the Friends of Homer Harris Park including neighbors, Central Area activists, landscape design consultants from Worthy and Associates, friends of Dr. Harris, and staff from Seattle Parks and Recreation and Seattle Parks Foundation.

At the first public meeting on August 20, Parks asked the community for ideas about a park that would best serve their neighborhood. These ideas were incorporated into design alternatives that were brought in for community review at the October 1 meeting. **The next meeting on November 12 7-8:30 pm at Garfield Community Center will present a final design for community comment.**

Speakers at the October 1 meeting:

- **Kari Stiles, Seattle Parks Foundation, 332-9900 kari@seattleparksfoundation.org** staffs the **Friends of Homer Harris Park** as they focus on park art/history plan, fundraising
- **Adrienne Bailey, Director Seattle Central Community College: Community Outreach Partnership Center** reviewed the evolution of an art plan for the park and described possible art and history elements for the community to consider.
- **Royal Alley-Barnes, Parks Central East Operations Manager** spoke about the how daily park maintenance and operations influences park design
- **Steve Worthy, Worthy and Associates Landscape Architects** presented his three design concepts for park development. His ideas were for spaces to inspire and engage community

General community questions:

1. Can this be a pesticide free park? *Yes. The community can request this level of maintenance.*
2. Why does the art plan focus on nostalgia rather than the changing Central Area community? *Using historic artifacts was a suggestion made at art/history meetings. The art plan is evolving with your input.*
3. What are the relative costs of the proposals? *Each proposal is comparable in price. The costs of the project may increase with specialized play equipment, art and paving.*
4. How will the park build and maintain the park boundaries – alley, sidewalk, neighbor? *Parks only has funds to build and maintain within Park land boundaries. However, Parks is looking for additional City support to upgrade sidewalks. The park will have a wall along the alley and will not have access to the park. Parks does not maintain alleys. The boundaries will be discussed in more detail at the next community meeting.*

Parks hopes to dedicate Homer Harris Park late in 2004 (Homer Harris day is November 13)

\$400,000 from anonymous donation to Seattle Parks Foundation; \$100,000 from 2000 Pro Parks Levy are available to plan, design and construct Homer Harris Park.

COMMUNITY DESIGN DISCUSSION

The meeting participants broke into 5 groups (including one group of teens from the Garfield Teen Life Center) to discuss the three design alternatives and park design elements that were important to them. Each group presented their ideas. The following summarizes the presentations.

PREFERRED “PLAN D”

Four out of five groups preferred “Plan D” One group voted for “Plan E”

Elements that the community preferred in Plan D were its organic rather than linear design, large lawn and mix of play/passive elements. Comments on D include desire to make the center park path line up with YMCA parking lot, to keep the stairs on E Howell and to keep the berm on east side low enough to retain views.

SEATING AND TABLES

All groups asked for more tables and seating: more picnic tables, especially near play area, a variety of seating choices alone or with groups, for birthday parties, for elders. Request to place BBQ grills near picnic tables. Add benches to enjoy views, watch play area. Also add more game tables, clustered as in Plan C & E, but not in the back corners as in Plan C.

PLAY AREA

Groups reached different opinions on the need for a play area. Two groups felt other nearby parks provided enough play opportunities for children. The other three groups said “play area is a must” to energize park and provide more play opportunity to community. General consensus was that the primary focus of the park should not be on play and that Plan D showed too much of the park devoted to play area. Several groups suggested the addition of adult play areas like pull-up bars, climbing wall, stretching, etc. Request for play equipment made of wood rather than plastic/metal.

DESIGN DETAILS AND “THEMES”

There were mixed opinions and no consensus on following: whether to keep the big maple tree (is it safe, does it interfere with views?); to add a gazebo (costly, potentially noisy area); bricks for a Heritage Trail (idea is overused, and unattractive but a good fund raiser), Victorian theme (Homer Harris did not come out of the 19th century).

Some art elements were more broadly appealing: bulldog attached to a fountain, football art. The idea of community garden and flower beds came up several times. “Make a garden that honors Dr. Harris love for gardening. Have one of the following maintain it: friends of Homer Harris, NOVA or Garfield horticulture program, the community itself. Make the garden year around by staging with perennials; choose favorites of Dr. Harris.”

Next meeting Wednesday, November 12, 7PM, Garfield Community Center. At this meeting the final preferred design will be presented for community comment.